Fish vendors urge Gov't to end Sino-Van agreement

By Hilaire Bule May 27, 2026 0

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Local ships now using the pontoons at Paray Bay.
By Hilaire Bule

Local fish vendors at Manples Fish Market say the Vanuatu Government should reconsider the agreement signed with the Chinese fishing company that led to the establishment of Sino-Van and terminate the contract.

Fish vendors, especially mothers, said the main purpose of the joint venture was to build a factory to process fish caught in Vanuatu waters, but instead frozen fish is now being sold in areas of Port Vila, including at the Paray Bay wharf.

They said Sino-Van's fish is directly competing with local fish, which remains one of the main sources of income for many local families.

The vendors appealed to the Government to cancel the contract and assist local fishermen in selling their catch.

The vendors said if the Government places importance on Sino-Van, then local fish sellers should receive the same treatment through improved facilities. They said they are currently using only tents and the shade of trees to sell fish.

Fish currently being sold at Manples, Korman and other parts of Port Vila comes from Malekula in MALAMPA Province and SHEFA Province.

The current fish facility at Salili was built during the time Barak Sope served as Prime Minister.

Mr. Sope told the *Daily Post* yesterday that he was the one who signed the agreement establishing Sino-Van. He said he also signed the agreement allowing Chinese fishing boats to offload their catch at Paray Bay.

The vendors said Mr. Sope's decision may have originally been intended to develop the fisheries sector in Vanuatu, but since then the company has done little apart from competing with local fishermen.

The establishment of Sino-Van forced the Vanuatu Fisheries Department to relocate its breeding facilities from Paray Bay to Tagabe to allow Sino-Van to anchor pontoons used to receive fishing vessels offloading their catch.

It is now rare to see Chinese fishing vessels at Paray Bay because most fish caught in Vanuatu waters are offloaded in Solomon Islands and Fiji. The pontoons are now mainly used by local commercial vessels.

Sino-Van has also set up a fish stall at the Paray Bay wharf to sell frozen fish.

Last year, Sino-Van went to court seeking an eviction order against people residing on a plot of land at Salili on Efate for the proposed construction of a cannery.

Yesterday, the *Daily Post* visited the site and found that Sino-Van has already erected a shop and fish market, while construction of dormitories is currently underway.

The manager of Sino Van, known as Tom, said yesterday that a Chinese company had requested the construction of the dormitories to accommodate its employees.

"We will build the cannery, but for the time being we have to build the dormitories for the income of Sino Van," he said.

A chief at Salili said the Government must closely monitor the activities of Sino-Van.

"Today they will say they will do this, but tomorrow they will do different things, so it is proper for the Government to control them," the chief said.

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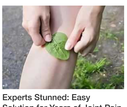
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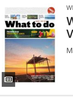

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May 5, 2026 0

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NKY · Nikkei 225	66,588.12	−882.57 −1.31%
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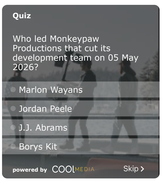

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